

Duke, Daphne

218529

From: Easterling, Deborah
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 3:30 PM
To: Duke, Daphne
Subject: FW: Docket number 2008-460-WS - Avondale Mills

From: Easterling, Deborah
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 3:28 PM
To: 'STEVEN STROTHER'
Cc: 'Sharpe, April'; 'mhicks@regstaff.sc.gov'; 'srogers@regstaff.sc.gov'; 'Scott Elliott'
Subject: RE: Docket number 2008-460-WS - Avondale Mills

Dear Mr. Strother:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email regarding Docket No. 2008-460-WS – Avondale Mills, Inc. – Application for Approval of a New Schedule of Rates and Charges for Water and Sewerage Service Provided to Customers in Aiken County, South Carolina.

In March 2004 the General Assembly enacted legislation which created the Office of Regulatory Staff. As a result of that legislation, effective January of 2005 the Public Service Commission took on an exclusively quasi-judicial role. All resources for the investigation and resolution of consumer inquiries and complaints were assigned to the Office of Regulatory Staff.

I am forwarding your email to that Agency's Consumer Services Department for handling.

Sincerely,
Deborah Easterling

-----Original Message-----

From: STEVEN STROTHER [mailto:SSTROTHER@aiken.k12.sc.us]
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2009 2:52 PM
To: Easterling, Deborah
Subject: RE: Docket number 2008-460-WS - Avondale Mills

RE: Docket number 2008-460-WS - Avondale Mills

Good afternoon.

I received a greatly increased water bill dated 7/28/2009. I was aware that I may be seeing an increase in my bill due to the rate increase hearing held earlier this year. However, this bill is inordinately high due to the rate increase and a tremendous increase in the water usage reported for my property at 148 Trolley Line Road.

The rate increase was expected. I can understand the reasons behind increasing rates for the use of water. This increase was expected to be around 700%, based on information received earlier in the year. I knew the rate increase was coming and was expecting a bill of around \$80.00 to \$112.00. This is not terribly unreasonable, although a bit higher than bills in the comparable area.

However, my bill was \$289.00. I was not prepared for a bill of this magnitude. Upon examination of the bill, I noticed that my water usage went from 5,000 gallons a month to 25,000 gallons. I called Avondale and they said:

I might have a leak. If so, this has developed in the last month, and I'm leaking out 20,000 gallons of water without notice. Also, every other resident I talked to must have developed a leak as well, because all were showing dramatically higher water usage than in the previous month. To me, this is a point of suspicion.

I asked if an employee would come by and show me how they read the meter. The person on the phone said he was not even sure my meter was read last month - although I had usage numbers on it.

When the person came out on 8/7/2009, he read 1188. The ending reading on the bill was 1186, which was read on 7/24/2009. This is 2000 gallons of usage in 14 days. This would equal about 4000 to 5000 gallons in a month. I have not done anything differently this month than

previous months. This indicates to me that I have no leak. I suspect that the beginning reading on one of my recent bills was a reading from 8 to 12 months ago, meaning that I have been paying a bill without my meter being read, and now I am being double billed as the readers catch the readings up. If this is the case, then Avondale would owe me money.

The employee also indicated that they are looking at placing new meters on each property, and he informed me that the new meters would probably read much higher than the meters we have currently. This sounded suspicious to me, not to mention costly for me and Avondale. Avondale has mentioned that they are short on cash to do any upgrades, so why replace meters for all the residence - that will read a lot higher?

I was expecting an increase of 700% (inordinate in my opinion), but got an increase of around 1800%. If the council reluctantly approved a 700% increase, please be aware that the increase you approved will be a lot higher (than you approved) for Graniteville residents, if Avondale installs new meters that will suddenly read a lot higher.

Please also look at the meter reading records. I do not believe that all the residents suddenly started using 500, 600, 700 percent more water in one month - and it is the same month that rate increases went into effect.

Please make sure we are treated fairly if it is in your heart.
The
residents here have been here for a long time. There are a lot
of
elderly and retired people here. I do not mind paying a fair
water bill.
I do not think anyone else does either.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Steven Strother
148 Trolley Line Road
Graniteville, SC 29829

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Work
Home

Aiken County Public Schools